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# REPLY

TO

MR. BURKE'S TWO LETTERS,

ON THE

PROPOSALS FOR PEACE

WITH THE

REGICIDE DIRECTORY OF FRANCE.

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BY

WILLIAM WILLIAMS,

AUTHOR OF RIGHTS OF THE PEOPLE, &c.

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**REPLY, &c. &c.**

**P**ITY such superior talents, such sublime eloquence, and such ardent energy, as flames in every page of Mr. Burke's late publication, should be enlisted in the cause of despotism and bloodshed. The greatest ornaments of human nature, are sometimes the most lamentable monuments of its infirmity; and those, whose penetrating genius unravels the profoundest labyrinths of truth, are not unfrequently lost upon its smoothest surface. I read the works of this great master of composition with an admiration bordering upon enthusiasm, the grandeur of his ideas, the beauties of his imagery, rouse every faculty of my soul; but they do not always carry conviction to my understanding. In the present letters, however, there is a display of candour, which his zeal against Jacobinism (his indiscriminate denomination of Reformers and Revolutionists of every description) has hitherto

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shrouded;

shrouded; his censures of the English Ministry and of the combined cabinets, prove how much better he is acquainted with the nature, conduct, and principles of courts, than with the nature, conduct, and principles of Republicanism.

In Owen's edition of these letters\*, Mr. Burke declares, that he supposes "a peace with jacobinism, the submission to its laws, and the adoption of its whole scheme, to be necessarily connected." In Rivington's edition this paragraph is expunged. I do not from thence believe that he has altered his opinion; for his argument, throughout, evidently hinges upon that supposition. I shall pass it unnoticed for the present, and specifically answer it in the winding up of my argument.

The Great Disposer of events has, in his unerring providence, sorely bruised him. Misfortune ever claims a tear, and sacred be the tributary drop that mingles with the grief of an afflicted father. The present face of Europe is awful; the inroads of desolation, though great, are trivial to those which are behind; "the vacuity to be filled with public sorrow, is vast indeed." But, it is not for kings and nobles that I am concerned; my fears are awakened

\* Page 2.

for the great body of the people, as valuable, and far more numerous, than the soft children of affluence. Yet the prospect, while it demands a sigh, invites a smile; through a dreary wilderness we shall travel to the land of promise, and journey through ruinous commotions to universal happiness and liberty.

In a former pamphlet, I observed, that Mr. Burke's writings carried their antidote along with them. His invectives against French principles are so unwarrantably bitter, and in such direct contradiction to known facts, that I will hazard the prophecy, that his labours are unrewarded by one convert; but the glowing picture he has drawn, of the falsehood, treachery, corruption, inconsistency, avarice, imbecility, stupidity, and cowardice of all the courts of Europe, and of the English cabinet in particular, cannot fail to multiply, and that greatly, the votaries of jacobinism. When the popular writers loaded them with but part of this guilty mountain, a cry of falsehood and misrepresentation was immediately raised; and prosecution, and persecution, employed for the destruction of such immeasurable liars. But who will contradict Mr. Burke? What sceptic will disbelieve him? His accusations are armed with scriptural authority,



authority, and not even Mr. Windham's Metaphysics can quibble them away.

Far from lamenting \* the change which is taking place in the popular disposition, I rejoice at it. Britons were formerly free; the glorious exploits of our ancestors, prove that their affections moved in the orbit of liberty. At times they were depressed by the overbearing insolence of tyrants; but as their desires were pointed right, they invariably returned to their original channel. But, "a change in the national spirit," and "the most terrible of all revolutions," was well nigh effected. The corruption of the cabinet, the open venality of the great, and the systematic apostacy of the leaders, had tainted the morals of the people, who generally are those whom they cannot equal. They saw virtue laughed out of countenance, honest poverty despised, and religion set at naught, by those whose exalted stations and superior talents rendered them the standards of national manners; they had travelled far in the aphelion of vice. Thus degenerate, a change in the national character could alone rescue them from the gulf of slavery, into which their self-interestedness had almost plunged them. Such a change is cer-

tainly, though slowly taking place, and snatched from this ghastly ruin, Britain will become a greater and freer nation than time has yet beheld her.

Corrupt as man is, I cannot think with Mr. Burke, that a state can be so constructed as to be capable of eternal duration. I think there is an analogy between it and the individuals of whom it is composed. Morals appear to me to be entirely dependent upon physics. A commonwealth "is \* an arbitrary production of the human mind." If then the mind, which is the primary cause, is corrupt, that corruption must be communicated to the effect, and hence the government will contain in itself the seeds of destruction. Besides, imperfect beings cannot create a work of absolute perfection, and nothing short of absolute perfection has the capacity of lasting for ever. The cause of the rise and decadence of nations is thus solved, and the different periods of their duration arises from the various degrees of excellence of their respective constitutions. The extreme depravity of a constitution likewise protracts its existence. A people, buried in superstition and ignorance, are torpid, and unconscious of the rights and remedies with which the all-bountiful Creator

has invested them. If the propagation of this superstition be wisely provided for, ages may be requisite to rend the veil; but it will be rent. This the French nation has done, it has regenerated man. In other revolutions, the old governments have been infanted and invigorated, here, it has been utterly consumed, and a phoenix has arisen from its ashes. The true principles of representation are now discovered, and a few years will render France the wonder and admiration of the world.

It was not the vices of the king\* which precipitated the ruin of its monarchy, it was the vices of the court and of the clergy, which had contaminated the people, and their pollution is the trumpet of destruction to a government. Woe unto those rulers who attend not to the public morals, they are the prolific mother of all evils, and of every danger.

Mr. Burke invariably confounds the nation with the government, and considers them as synonymous and co-durable. No two ideas are more distinct. The welfare of the nation is sometimes built upon the ruins of the government. Such has been the case in France. The miseries of the "Republic of Regicide,"

\* Page 6.

† Page 7.

which



which he has marshalled in funeral array, prove the immense force of a state unshackled by government and free to use all its native energies. As to the popular discontents he speaks of, in whatever degree they existed, they were merely a dissatisfaction with some particular individuals, not a disgust at the Republic. Light as the English character is, and ever was\*, it is stability itself when compared with the weathercock frivolity of the old French character. But what a revolution has been effected there! The *petit maitre* is antiquated, and paints and patches banished from the thoughts of the women;—Lycean gravity is stamped on every feature, and a race of apes are converted into a generation of philosophers. If Jacobinical principles (and Mr. Burke admits they have made great inroads into Britain) are thus stable, and have this gravitating quality, if their votaries are “utterly incapable of amendment†.” How is a fluctuation in the public mind to be expected? and without a fluctuation, he has but small expectation of the tide of success turning in our favour‡.

He candidly acknowledges, that we must use extraordinary exertions||; that our situation is

\* Page 9. † Page 67. ‡ Page 8. || Page 9.

difficult, never more so\*; infinitely more unpromising than it wast, owing to the "dishonest policy of the allies," and of "Great Britain among the foremost;" and that we are but at the beginning of our troubles. This is, however, giving the lie direct to the king, who, in his speech from the throne, comforted us with the assurance, that we were in a very prosperous way. But at the beginning of our troubles? a hundred millions of money, and a hundred thousand lives, are but the prologue to the tragedy Mr. Pitt is acting! There are five acts and an epilogue yet to come. I have heard him called the husband of Britannia;—with more propriety might he be denominated her undertaker.

Mr. Burke ingenuously tells us†, that we are reduced to that dreadful dilemma, that if we would save all, we must hazard all. France is resolved to stake her existence rather than retract; if, therefore, we would engage her upon equal terms, we must do the same. Horrid alternative! We must destroy, or be destroyed! But then the wealth and power of Great Britain have never been so considerable as at this perilous moment. "We are full even to a "plethora §." Alas, we are in the last stage of

\* Page 18. † Page 10. ‡ Page 12. § Page 13.

a consumption! If, instead of enquiring of stern ambition and unfeeling avarice, he would visit the poor-houses and examine the books of poor-rates; enter the cottage, and pass through the lanes and alleys of cities; the tattered garments and wan visages; the sunk eyes and unemployed hands of millions, would convince him, that his statements are a dream, the effusions of a heated imagination.

Our continental connexions have embroiled us in perpetual wars; and yet, Mr. Burke would bind them closer to us \*. We need no foreign ally;—but for that crooked policy which separates the interest of the government from that of the nation; disarms the people, and deprives them of that weight in the political machine to which they are entitled, and which they ought to possess; the attack of united Europe would be as impotent against us, as it has been against France.

Our sympathy, which he so highly praises †, is cruelty; our tenderness, barbarity. Not a dispute that we have not fomented, not a quarrel in which we have not taken a part; and as if our interference was not a sufficient scourge to mortality, we have subsidized, threatened, and

\* Page 14.

† Page 16.



intrigued, till Europe was embroiled from one end to the other. If this be refinement, happy savages who wander from field to forest, the sweet humanities of your nature uncivilized into guilt.

But "public prosecutions are become little less than schools of treason\*." "How comes it, that in all the state prosecutions of magnitude, from the Revolution to within these two or three years, the crown has scarcely ever retired disgraced and defeated from its courts?" Because no former administration instituted such prosecutions as the present have done; when they set an example, they did not hold it culpable to follow it;—nine day trials were uninvented. They impregnated no mountains, therefore no mice were born to them. They were content to use the laws as they found them, and essayed not violently to stretch them beyond their tone; and yet found them sufficient to protect the Commonwealth, without the aid of the two dying bequests of the last parliament,

The necessity which Mr. Burke supposes† for popular leaders, and the uncontrolled authority with which he clothes them, is the strongest possible satire upon the existing government of

\* Page 19 and 20. † Page 21.

Great Britain. All men are endowed with reasoning faculties, and to attend to the cultivation of them is the most important duty of rulers. I mean not to assert, that by any human means they can be all rendered equally wise; their different situations and circumstances form an unsurmountable barrier to it; but they may be all sufficiently improved to judge between right and wrong, justice and injustice, and to distinguish a wise man from a fool. This is all that is necessary, and it reduces the power of the leaders to the mere execution of the laws, and the devising such improvements in them as their superior study and knowledge may suggest. Beyond this, if their authority extend, it is an irrefragable proof that the government is radically bad, or that it is scandalously administered.

The war in which we are engaged, is "a war of a peculiar nature\*." It is not a war with an ambitious Court or an intriguing Cabinet;—it is a war with men conscious of their dignity, and duly appreciating the value of liberty. Theirs is "an armed doctrine†." But who has armed it? Not themselves;—they wished for peace. The surrounding monarchs, confounding the destruction of the government with the destruction of the nation, jumped at what they

\* Page 22. † Ibid,

deemed a favourable opportunity for pillage (for Mr. Burke admits that on the part of the allies it is a war of plunder\*). Providentially, however, they miscalculated—their greediness has been righteously punished, and the despoilers are themselves despoiled.

He next asserts†, that if the French Republic can at all exist, it will finally prevail. I shall not discuss it now, it will furnish matter for the conclusion.

I consider the conduct of the Directory, so far as relates to the negotiations for peace, to be manly, fair and honourable. Contrary to the courtly custom of trailing out a negotiation for months, and explaining and re-explaining till the whole of the original meaning is lost; they explicitly declared what the terms were upon which they would, or indeed could conclude a peace. They specifically stated upon what they would, and upon what they would not negotiate.

Mr. Burke's argument, in pages 24 and 25, recoils upon himself; and the stigma he endeavours to cast upon the French, fixes itself upon the English administration. While our armies fought under the standard of victory, no sound

\* Page 143. † Page 23.



of peace was heard; bloody proscriptions and massacres were alone talked of, and marching to Paris, and extermination, were the standing orders of the day. But when the goddess unfurled her banner in the French camp, and the allies found it necessary to "change their front," and march in an inverse direction; when the gigantic strength and energy of the Republic shone with such transcendent lustre that the very moles beheld it; they began to throw out their "ogles, lures, and glances" for peace; and while they crouched to the enemy abroad, raved against them at home with all the bombastic rant of "mock heroic tragedy." Forced into the war, it was not unreasonable for the French to require an indemnity; the conquered countries were united to the Republic by the unanimous voice of the people, and by the general will of their own inhabitants. It would have been a foul and indelible stain upon their character to have relinquished them against their will, and trafficked them away by a Smithfield bargain. But even if they had been so inclined, neither the authority of the Directory or of the Councils, was competent to the renunciation. It must have been referred to the people. The declaration of Citizen Barthelemi to Mr. Wickham, was, therefore, nothing but a plain matter of fact relation.

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But the French assert, that it is the war of government and not of the nation\*. The people were cajoled into it;—their generous humanity was employed to dupe them into an approbation of a measure hostile to their real interests. The atrocities (and atrocities there were) committed by the ruling powers in France, were enormously exaggerated, and the trumpet of alarm sounded in every village, that a conspiracy existed in this kingdom, of which France was the inspiring soul, whose single object was to murder the king, the royal family, and the nobles; in a word, every one without distinction of sex or age who possessed the least share of worldly goods. To enforce the belief of it, the Habeas Corpus Act was suspended, and individuals of unsullied patriotism, distinguished talents, and unblemished characters, were torn from their families, and entombed, for nine months, in solitary dungeons. At length the evil day of reckoning came, when a series of independent juries declared the accusations utterly without foundation. The acquittal of an hitherto obscure shoemaker, forms a more memorable epoch in the English annals, than the discovery of the gunpowder plot, or the landing of William III. The eyes of the people were then opened, the delusion vanished, and ever since they have been clamorous for peace.

\* Page 30.

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With respect to the declaration of the Directory \*, that " they will have no peace with their enemies, until they have reduced them to a state which will put them under an impossibility of pursuing their wretched projects." In what does it differ from the late lofty language of our now obsequious premier? " French promises " could not be depended upon, no reliance " could be placed on their treaties, their impotence alone could allay his fears, and their " decrepitude was an indispensable preliminary " to pacification." But now, how are the proud looks humbled, and the mighty ones brought to shame! Oh, happy pen! that with such inimitable strokes can paint! Oh, envied imagination! that can so exquisitely anticipate the interviews between freedom and bondage, and foresee the titled plenipotentiaries of royalty prostrating themselves with Oriental reverence, and kissing the ground whereon the haughty citizen stands. Surely, for this, Lord Malmesbury deserves a dukedom.

From whatever quarter, and at whatever period, proposals for peace could have been made, the acknowledgement of the Republic follows as a matter of course. To heed a message from it, was virtually to acknowledge its authority.

\* Page 32.



Why Great Britain and the Allies, attended at the "factory of degradation" at Basse, is sufficiently obvious. They had caught a tartar, and justly concluding, that the longer they continued the war, the worse they should speed, were desirous of getting out of it by the only door that was open. The impenetrable stuff of which the Republicans were formed, received no impressions from prosperous, or adverse fortune. They were immutable, unchangeable. The war was a Trophonian cave, into which the monarchs had precipitately entered; they were now revolutionized by it, and the brazen notes of havock and extermination were melted into the warblings of peace and recognition.

It appears that Mr. Wickham's business was only to pump Citizen Barthelemi, "to sound France, on her disposition towards a general pacification; to know whether she would consent to send Ministers to a Congress, at such a place as might be hereafter agreed upon; to know whether they would communicate the general grounds of a pacification, such as France would be willing to propose as a foundation for a negociation for peace with his Majesty and his allies; but he had no authority to enter into any negociation with Citizen Bar-

" thelemi

*" thelemi upon these subjects."* For what purpose was this application made? it was like a lover writing to his mistress to know when she will be pleased to receive his addresses in person. France, however, with a rather unmaidenly forwardness, though perfectly agreeable to that openness and candour which are the distinguishing characteristics of a Republic, where state secrecy is unknown, began the courtship herself, by explicitly stating the terms upon which she must be wooed. The ambiguity and vagueness of the questions put to her by Mr. Wickham, warranted her doubting the sincerity of the pacific intentions of the British court; they were admirably calculated for delay, and rendering negotiation endless, and gaining time to recruit the bankrupt treasuries and exhausted armies of the Allies.

As to their refusing to treat with the Allies, otherwise than singly \*, they entered the confederacy one by one, and the Directory thought it their interest that they should quit it in the same manner. Mr. Burke's accusations are very ill urged, on behalf of a power he repeatedly acknowledges to be waging a war of plunder: besides, is not a belligerent nation justified in procuring for itself the most advanta-

\* Page 40.

geous peace it can! The Directory did their duty. It was the best possible mode of negociation for the French, and the only objection urged against it is, that it was the worst for the English. Moral justice is universally the same: an author treating on this subject, should consider himself as the citizen of another state, he should disrobe himself of all national and party prejudices, and judge as faithfully for the one as he does for the other. At all events, their insisting upon this mode of negociation, no more implies insincerity in them, than our objecting to it implies insincerity in us.

My faculties are singularly dull, if in the declaration, which Mr. Burke quotes \*, the Directory are not as clear and open as to what may not, as they are to what may be the subject of negociation. The conquered countries which are united to the Republic, they have no authority to resign; those which are not united to the Republic they can resign; these, therefore, may become the subjects of negociation.

The four following pages of Mr. Burke's pamphlet, are a mass of false facts and false principles. He surely never reviewed them

\* Page 41 and 42.

after



after they were written, or he would not have given them to the world in their present undigested state. The conquered countries were united to the Republic by their own consent; Mr. Burke cannot be ignorant that both the Dutch and Belgians assisted the French in their enterprize; the consolidation was the effect of the popular will, which is the only lawful governor, and it is the popular will alone which can disunite them. The only mode by which they could have been made objects of negotiation, would have been by Mr. Wickham stating it as a preliminary, and requesting the Directory to lay it before the councils, to be by them referred to the people. Their sanction would have been a warrant to the Directory to negotiate about them. The Republic can take its own laws into consideration, and if it pleases, abrogate them. It was the Republic, and not the legislature, that swept away the constitution; the legislature is the creature of the constitution, and is in many respects "cooped and cabined in." It never pretended to omnipotence; that is the alone attribute of the people. But Mr. Burke has so jumbled them with the legislative and executive authorities, that it is frequently impossible to know which he speaks of, unless we suppose him utterly ignorant of popular principles, which if he is, it very ill becomes him

to write against them. His relatives have either no antecedents, or an antecedent that converts them into nonsense.

The "manly note\*," in answer to this, is in the same strain of blunder; the consolidation of the conquered countries was not effected by a law, but by the constitution, and with the repetition of this observation, I shall dismiss it.

Peace the noisy tongues of clamorous faction, exclaiming against ministerial pride and arrogance; see the lowly procession bending their supple knees, and smitten on the one cheek, turning the other to the smiters. Behold this white-robed train of patient martyrs bearing their crosses to Basse, to Berlin, to Denmark, and lastly, to Parisian calvary; and licking their petitions into the fashionable shape of every town they come to! O truly christian saints! Meek unresisting lambs! "Blessed are the peace-makers, for they shall be called the children of God."

To the first observation of Mr. Burke's†, upon the official note, which he has extracted from the journal of the defenders of the country, I reply,—That the willingness expressed

\* Page 45.

† Page 53.

by the Directory to treat with persons of whom they entertain so bad an opinion, is a strong proof of the sincerity with which they profess to desire peace.

To the second—That both they and the Dutch, will undoubtedly exert their utmost energy to establish their colonies upon as respectable footings as possible, and rear the plant of commerce, whose tender fibres withered under the inclement sky of ancient despotism. It is not to be concealed (for let the English nation know the full extent of the obligations they owe to administration) that they will succeed. The enlarged views, the vast comprehensions, the indefatigable endeavours of the Directory, will soon expand the acorn into an oak; unblighted by taxes and monopolies, it will spread its enormous arms, and overshadow the two hemispheres.

To the third—That this war is carried on against the interest and inclination of the majority of the people of England. Against their interest, because all, but the unwieldy rich, are starving. Against their inclination, as the dissatisfied clamours of every street and village proclaim. The success of the ministerial candidates, at the late elections, is no disproof of  
this,



this, for out of six millions, (much less than the number of adults in this island) not one twenty-fourth have the privilege of voting; and of those, a vast majority are in some way dependent upon, or to express myself more courteously, upon terms of friendship with the court and the aristocracy.

In the very next page\* Mr. Burke admits, that the conduct of Ministers justifies the suspicions which the Directory entertains, "Whoever goes," says he, "to the directorial presence under this passport, with this offensive comment and foul explanation, goes in the avowed sense of the court to which he is sent; as the instrument of a government, dissociated from the interests and wishes of the nation, for the purpose of cheating the people of France and the people of England. He goes out the declared emissary of a faithless Ministry. He has perfidy for his credentials. He has national weakness for his full powers." If this be not ample ground for suspicion, I do not know what suspicion is.

But another, and a very powerful reason may be assigned for their doubts of the sincerity of the English government. The war was in its

\* Page 55.

commencement, avowedly a war of extermination. The declaration of the 29th of October, 1793, a part of which Mr. Burke has inserted\*, and which is entirely of a piece, terms Louis the 16th their lawful sovereign, and attributes the calamities which France experienced, "to the ambition, perfidy, and violence of those whose crimes have involved their own country in misery, and disgraced all civilized nations." No formal renunciation has been made of sentiments thus formally avowed; on the contrary, throughout the whole negociation there has been a studied avoidance of recognizing the authority of the Republic, and it was not till the tide of victory had ebbed, that lofty language was abandoned.

But we are yet further the original promulgators of suspicion. A principal avowed ground of hostility, was a decree, which tended to a resolution to interfere in the domestic concerns of other countries, if applied to by the people, which was repealed to silence the royal cry that was raised against it. Yet this could not hush the suspicions of administration, who, in despite of their formal abjuration, persisted that they still retained the intention to intermeddle, whenever and wherever a favourable opportunity presented itself.

\* Page 60.

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But here is the master key which unlocks these otherwise impenetrable secrets, and justifies the suspicions which the French harbour of ministerial perfidy\*. *"It is said that there is a secret in the House of Commons. It is said, that ministers act not according to the votes, but according to the dispositions of the majority. I hear that the minority has long since spoken the general sense of the nation; and that to prevent those who compose it from having the open and avowed lead in that house, or perhaps in both houses, it was necessary to pre-occupy their ground, and to take their propositions out of their mouths, even with the hazard of being afterwards reproved with a compliance which it was foreseen would be fruitless."* Ministers then have long acted in direct opposition to the sense of the nation. Here is a palpable proof that the government and the people are distinct; that they may be, and actually are in opposition to one another; that it is the war of government and not of the people. Administration do not desire peace, but *lest opposition should have the same lead within doors that they have long had without*, they think it convenient *"to pre-occupy their ground, &c."* But mark the dilemma in which Mr. Burke has placed the House of Commons:—either they speak the opinion of their Constituents, which if they do, they represent but a very small minority of the nation, and are



the House of Commons of only part of the people of England, which renders their institution corrupt; or they do not speak the opinion of their constituents, which makes them a corrupt body. But further—"Ministers act not according to the vote, but according to the dispositions of the majority." The majority then vote against their consciences, and are individually corrupt; and yet the only crime alledged against the "Jacobins" of England, is an endeavour to reform and cleanse this Augean stable.

I come now to consider \* Mr. Burke's calculation, of the numbers of "political citizens of England. (This is the second time he has used this Jacobinical appellation.) As I am not in possession of the data upon which he makes it, I can only comment upon it as I find it; he excludes all those who are in a state of "menial dependence, or what is virtually such," (a vague indefinite expression) to the amount of two millions. These form no part of the public. The number of political citizens he states at four hundred thousand, who "form the public," and are the "natural representatives of the people; and on this body, more than on the legal constituent, the artificial representation depends." Oh, for Mr. Windham's skill in metaphysics to understand this! Of

\* Page 66.

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these,

these, one-fifth, or eighty thousand, are "pure Jacobins, incapable of any amendment." "I do not know," adds he, "whether, if I aimed at the total overthrow of a kingdom, I should wish to be encumbered with a larger body of partizans." But the remainder of the inhabitants of Great Britain are not so languid and inanimate as Mr. Burke supposes. A considerable portion of them are actually converted, and the remainder are in a fair way of being converted to the principles of "Jacobinism." What are the weapons with which the Jacobins have fought? How have they endeavoured to strengthen their party? Not by violence;—not by tumult;—not by inflammatory publications and discourses; but by cool reasonings, dispassionate arguments, and invitations to a sober research after truth. Undoubtedly there have been some who have held a contrary line of conduct, a few weak and sometimes wicked individuals; but they have never been countenanced by the great body. If their logic is "unsound and sophistical," why has not Mr. Burke, or some other royal writer, disproved them?

But the Jacobins† "all go in one direction, they all bear one way, they all go to the substantial merits of their cause." This is negatively admitting, that it is not so with the sup-

\* Page 71.

porters of administration; they jar, they differ, they are an untempered composition of discordant substances—Satan is divided against Satan.

The incessant din for peace, which Mr. Burke so charitably attributes to a hatred of their country, springs from the direct contrary motive. Mourning over the calamities of an unparalleled war, sorrowing for their depopulated ruined nation, they generously strive to rescue her from her impending and final doom. Ask the disconsolate widow, the deserted orphan, the childless parent, the late affluent beggar, whether they are not philanthropists? Animated by this "wide extended love of all the human race," venerating the land that gave them birth, they are active and indefatigable, and knowing that a well-informed people is alone a happy people, they labour to disseminate their principles, and consolidate every individual into one pacific mass. Hence their restless energy, and the success which attends their exertions.

The quotation\* of Sir Robert Walpole's conduct, merely serves to shew the impotence of Mr. Pitt, in choosing a weak minister for his model, instead of a wise one; and the abominable venality and corruption of the then House of Commons. It is rather mal-a-propos, con-

\* Page 71.



considering that the people are clamouring for a reform in parliament, and that the members of the present parliament vote against their consciences\*.

Mr. Burke emphatically tells us†, the present must be a long war; and by way of apology for the further effusions of blood, adds, that from 1689 to 1713, there was not an interval of five years, in which we were not at war, or preparing for war. He might, I believe, have extended it, without much violence, to the greater part of Europe. But this, like most of his other authorities, makes against the cause it is cited to support. It proves that bad and sanguinary principles prevailed somewhere, or rather that they were epidemic; and the almost incessant hostilities which have ever since desolated Europe, and reduced ancient France to bankruptcy, and the remainder of the governments to the verge of bankruptcy, awfully proves that the system is not changed for the better. The lamentable picture of the state of Britain, in William the Third's time, so emphatically delineated by Mr. Burke, while it demonstrates how great things can be achieved by an energetic majority, though clogged with domestic feuds, an exhausted treasury, tottering credit, and dry fountains of revenue, sadly tell us, that our

\* Page 63.

† Page 76.

boasted

boasted Constitution and Government are but theoretically good; that penury and distress have long lost their novelty, and that the fabric, beautiful upon paper, like the fair skin of a female viewed through a microscope, loses its loveliness when beheld in the mirror of experiment. But what were the mole-hills then removed to the Herculean labours, the massy mountains removed by regenerated France? Stupendous pyramid of human greatness! Daughter of Greece and Rome! but, oh, how far surpassing either parent!

But here I must correct one of those mistatements, which the impetuous haste of Mr. Burke sometimes overlooks\*. Bank-paper was not "often" at a discount of twenty per cent. It was so only once; and the consequence was, that the Bank stopped payment. The manner in which its credit was restored, and the impossibility of restoring it from a similar situation now, I have shewn in another publication†.

Mr. Burke has stated‡ the enormous increase of our foreign and inland commerce, since the Revolution; but he has not even hinted at their incalculable decrease during the present dis-

\* Page 71.

† Rights of the People. Chapter on the State of England.

‡ Page 79.

astirous war. The deserted work-shops of our manufacturing towns, and what is infinitely worse, the unprecedented emigration of our mechanics, unable to support themselves any longer in this iron land; and who carry with them our manufactures and our improvements, proclaim its greatness with a voice not heard, but felt.

I am very far from thinking the multiplication of banking-houses a pillar of prosperity. They are so many volcanoes, disemboing unsubstantial paper lava, which has deluged the whole land, and which consumes our Hesperian orchards of gold and silver fruit. The bankruptcy of one of them, directly or indirectly, involves the ruin of hundreds; and they have more than once shaken the throne of commerce to its centre. I know that paper currency is convenient in a state; but then it should be so fortified by national security, and the equilibrium of specie, that the property of individuals, and the existence of the Government, should not be put in a state of perpetual jeopardy.

But the situation of the country in William the Third's time, was extremely different from what it is now. The expence of the war, allowing for the different value of money, was comparatively



paratively small. The dividends of bankrupt Europe were not paid out of the English capital. If public credit was then a ricketty infant, its infancy was its salvation; it was that alone which enabled it to survive the severe sicknesses it endured; it was free from the decrepitude of age, and had not received the triple warning of dissolution, the people starving, the specie in a consumption, and the taxes in a dropsy.

Deadness and want of spirit were then universal in the nation\*, now, all is animation and energy; the sleepers awake fast from their lethargic stupor, and the delusive visions of the night rapidly pass away. Their aversion to a recommencement of hostilities was merely because "they were tired out with taxes." Here, I admit, their situation was a type, though but a faint one, of ours; but the majority of the people, at present, are averse to a continuation of the war from principle; the two million automats are rising into life; and, ere the vital spark is well breathed into their nostrils, discover that men have rights, and that the French have merely exercised them; that their own ancestors formerly exercised theirs, in part, or the House of Hanover would have been yet mewed up in its electorate, highness unsprouted into majesty.

\* Page 84.

If the opposition which the people of England manifest to the war, arises from principle, the only way to engage them zealously in it, is to combat that principle and disprove it. Declamation and invective serve but to strengthen them in their opinion; for they are weapons no skilful arguer will use, when he can get any better. The sublime flights of language with which Mr. Burke's pamphlet abounds, though they make forcible appeals to our passions, but feebly assail our reason. The long retrospect of the close of the last century, has been to little purpose. Magna Charta, the Habeas Corpus Act, the Bill of Rights, and other once beautiful pillars of the temple where British liberty dwelt, bespeak the glorious achievements of our ancestors, louder and more durably than the trumpet. When war shall be read of with abhorrence, and the rust of time shall have eaten away the military trophies, the memory of the patriot shall be respected, and his ashes moistened with a tear.

We now come to the opening of another ward in the political lock. The members of the House of Commons have practised war experiments \* at the expence of their constituents' blood and treasure. Happy nation! to be blessed with such philosophical legislators! Experience

\* Page 90.

must

must be bought, and though at a dear rate, we have at length purchased the assurance, that the Republic is invincible; and that a state, entirely free, is mistress of the world. Having acquired this knowledge of Republican power, they are next desirous to gauge her pride, and ascertain the precise height the thermometer of her haughtiness stands at, and what effect the difference of degrees of longitude and latitude has upon it. Hence, the philosophical missions to Basse, Berlin and Paris.

Wearied with this sublime flight through above 90 pages, Mr. Burke now falls asleep\*; and, in the ensuing 15 pages, delineates the fairy visions, the variegated scenes of Lilliput and Brobdignag, the effusions of his night thoughts. The certainly consistent, and as certainly false pictures, he draws of the laws, manners, customs, and principles of the Republic, though amusive for their invention, are as fallacious as the Arabian Nights Entertainments, or the Tales of the Genii.

I freely admit, that a war to preserve us from the "imposition of irreligion †, and to "preserve our natural independence, pro-  
 "perty, liberty, life, and honour, from certain  
 "universal havock, is a war just, necessary,

\* Aliquando dormitat homerus. † Page 93.



"manly, and pious." Our duty to God, to ourselves, to posterity, all demand a perseverance in it, even to annihilation. Better not to give our children birth, than to surrender every thing that can render their lives honourable, useful, and happy.

But have the French endeavoured to impose this grievous yoke upon us? On the contrary, they have formally denied it. They have renounced all right, and all intention, of interfering in the domestic concerns of other nations, and merely contend for the reciprocal privilege of arranging their own affairs, uncontrouled by the arbitrary will of their neighbours. If I will not suffer a stranger to come into my house, it does not follow that I mean to turn him out of his. If I will not conform to his religion, I do not thereby declare an intention of pressing him into mine; and yet, these are the conclusions which Mr. Burke draws as inevitable.

Much as I deprecate the idea of a conquest, I so entirely differ with Mr. Burke\*, that I would rather ten thousand times see my country a department of France, than a province of any other nation. Kind heaven forbid, that ever I should behold the humane Suwarrow, strutting

\* Page 94.

the viceroy of the gentle Catherine, or the philanthropic Brunswick of the faithful Frederic, or the Prince of Peace, with his retinue of friars, inquisitors, and the other holy ingredients of an *auto da fe*. The English have hitherto been able to vindicate their own freedom, and, I trust, the sacred spark which illumined the breasts of their ancestors, has not mouldered with their ashes; but, surviving time and death, has descended to their children, a more invaluable legacy than all the venerable bulwarks they upreared. With it, we could have built them ourselves, without it, they will soon crumble into dust.

Mr. Burke and Lord Camden\* are not the first wise men who have been bewildered upon a plain. The French abolished their code of jurisprudence, not that they might be without law, but that they might simplify their laws, and have such as every body could understand. If they are without inns of court, it is because they do not want them. Where every citizen is a lawyer, the law is not a distinct profession.

If the visionary bases upon which Mr. Burke constructs the French Republic were real, I should be as decided an enemy to it as himself, but they have no existence, save in his own

\* Page 95.

ardent imagination\*. In the first place, they do not, nor ever did, lay it down as a fundamental principle—that all government, not being a democracy, is usurpation; and that all kings, *as such*, are usurpers. They merely assert the supremacy of the people, that all power is from them, and that they are the only source of natural authority; hereby denying the divine right of kings, and that their majesty is merely derivative; and if it be not so, the House of Hanover are usurpers, and the British nation traitors for submitting to their yoke. If the family of Stuart did not derive their throne from the popular will, the people had no right to dethrone them; which if they had not, the acts of settlement are void, and the next heir of the family of Stuart is our rightful sovereign. It was the people alone who gave the sceptre to William III. for the Houses of Lords and Commons, when separated from the King, are not a parliament; consequently their individual act cannot bind the nation.

Secondly—† Mr. Burke mistakes a revolutionary government for a permanent one. Under a revolutionary government every thing is afloat, and the ruling powers are compelled to many acts of violence, which, in other circumstances,

\* Page 96.

† Page 98.

they



they would abhor. Affailed by unnatural means, by open war, secret corruption, and domestic insurrection; what wonder if unnatural efforts were requisite to overcome them? And it is evident the people considered it in this light, or they would not so cheerfully have submitted to them; for in all the revolutions and counter-revolutions, which have taken place, the ruin has invariably been aimed at unprincipled individuals, for the salvation of the Republic.

With respect to the third\*—Had Mr. Burke deeply considered the subject, he would have held a far different language; it was the anti-christianity of the popish religion that laid the foundation of the revolution. The conduct of the priests, evidently shewed that they considered it as a gainful trade, and for ages had systematically debauched the minds of their devotees; the climax of blasphemy was at length reached, and the iniquities of the fathers were visited upon the children. To the sons of the Roman strumpet we must trace the desolation, and it requires not the eyes of Lynceus to discern, that the same polluted fountain will shortly overflow all the countries which the triple crown encircles. How far the protestant nations will

\* Page 98.

be involved in the ruin, I shall not here enquire. If we calculate the corruption of the reformed (as they are called) clergy, and the consequent corruption of the laity, we shall find an accurate solution. The transitions from anti-christianity to deism, and from that to atheism, are natural, and account, in some degree, for the number of learned, in all ages, who have adopted the latter opinions.

But the atheistical decree of the Convention, by no means proves that the mass of the people were atheists. At that time, it frequently passed the most important decrees with precipitation, and sometimes as precipitately repealed them. They were not broke of the servile practice of following leaders; an eminent atheist could therefore give an atheistical colour to the whole. But it is not upon what they were, but upon what they are, that Mr. Burke should have argued. They are not so now. I admit, that they do not treat religion with that awful reverence it deserves; but the tide of popular opinion is flowing back, and will, must reach the high water-mark.

And does the venerable Brutus \* “affright our nature?” And is the sacred patriotism which

\* Page 100.

inflamed

inflamed his breast, impious and profane? Why, O ye historians, have ye wasted your midnight oil in transcribing for us heroism, we have neither the courage to imitate, or even the virtue to admire!

But, admitting that the zeal of some outstrips their reason; it proves, that they carried virtue to excess, and while we pity their delusion, are compelled to admire the energy which prompted to such lofty actions. It proves, that all private regards were swallowed up in the public welfare, and that the guardian genius of Rome was the tutelary spirit of France.

I disapprove strongly\* of their degradation of the marriage state; but when the whole mass of the people are roused into action, (and without it, the French revolution could not have been effected) temporary extremes must be expected; but the ebullitions of passion speedily evaporate, and unsullied reason resumes her golden sway. Without wandering into philosophical speculations, to prove that chastity is the only bulwark of the marriage-bed, and, with it, of human happiness; the creation of a softer sex sufficiently demonstrates the union which ought to subsist between the two, and the im-

\* Page 101.



measurable gulf that parts the desire of mere brutal gratification, from the tender sympathy, the disinterested affection, the holy effervescence which the fair idol of the heart inspires, irrefragably proves, that as man cannot serve two gods, so neither can he love two women. Legal prostitution had been a principal means of corrupting the national morals, and bringing religion into disrepute. By legal prostitution, I mean, the forcing the hand of a child, where the heart cannot follow. Policy and humanity might [I do not absolutely say they did, and yet the numbers who greedily availed themselves of the relief, strongly imply that they did) require that this galling fetter should be broken, and its bond slaves emancipated. I think, however, that a short period should have been limited, and that all persons, who, within that time, did not take advantage of the permission, should have been precluded from its benefits. The offspring require the fostering care of the parents who gave them birth, and if it were only for their sakes, marriage should be eternal. Nevertheless, the female condition should be ameliorated; the slavery, to which even in Europe they are subjected, proves that the laws of all European states, England among the rest, are radically bad, and that the professors of christianity are strangers to the spirit and practice of it.

I do

I do not give implicit credit to all the sanguinary tales which Mr. Burke relates\*; but if there have been some such unnatural wretches, it proves no more against the French Revolution, than the cruelties of Nero do against royalty, or the enormities of Bonner against episcopacy; and further, it was the old government that nourished those monsters, and infused into them the execrable disposition they have manifested under the new one. Let Damien declare the human spectacles it exhibited.

The "polished vice," the "elegant, though not blameless luxury," which Mr. Burke speaks of† in such courtly language, is to me more dreadful than all the massacres of the Septembrizers, or the barbarities of Robespierre. Let vice wear its natural robe of hideousness and deformity, and it is a beacon for all mankind to shun; but when its crookedness is straitened with pads and pillows, when its wrinkles are glossed over with paint and beauty-spots, she is then a deceitful harlot who entraps the unwary, and whom the sage himself can hardly shun; she seduces the heedless youth, and assuming the appearance of virtue, points to the wide and flowery road of destruction.

As to‡ war, it may and will be put an end to, it may and will be extirpated from the earth,

\* Page 105.

† Page 107.

‡ Page 109.

and the French Revolution is the first effectual step towards its banishment. The French principles are of that bland homogeneous nature, that when harmonized by religion, they will digest not only all Europe, but the whole world, into one vast commonwealth. With many I expect to be set down as visionary, as the anti-type and successor of Brothers, when I declare my firm belief; nay, more, my absolute conviction, that the millennium is at hand, the reign of christianity and of peace; but it must be nursed in the cradle of universal war, the laurel crown must be rent away, before the brow can receive a crown of olive. Had Mr. Burke spent as much time in studying the prophecies, as he has in vilifying the Jacobins, he would long ago have discovered that they are invincible.

The ardent energy which they have manifested, and which have dislevered them from all governments, not nations\*, was ripened to its present perfection by the allies; they would not let them form a limited monarchy to their liking, and thereby forced them into republicanism.

I admit that a man, and it is the same with states, has no right to erect what is a nuisance to his neighbour; but if my neighbour forces

\* Page 112.



me to erect the nuisance, I do not see upon what principle of justice he can compel me to pull it down again. But I cannot agree that age sanctifies it\*; it is never too late to amend, and it is a maxim of the law of England, grounded on the rights of man†, (the second time Mr. Burke has used this expression) that “a bad custom ought to be abolished.” Were it not for the spirit of innovation, the most invaluable blessings to countries and to individuals would be unenjoyed. We should be at this moment almost in a state of nature, poor wandering savages, blind followers of superstitious druids, the sublime truths of revelation, the unblemished morality of the gospel, the assured hope of eternal happiness, and the Calvary from whence we ascend into it, all unknown. Yet, druidical groves would remain unsanctified, and the doctrine of transmigration a fable; though, in our fanaticism against novelty, we would not bear to be told so.

Blot out, Oh, memory! the ungentlemanlike, the unmanly opprobriums with which Mr. Burke, throughout the whole of his book, and in no place more than in the page before me‡, has defiled his paper. Root out those poisonous night-shades from this Eden, where every blooming flower, every fragrant sweet, flourish in per-

\* Page 115.    † Page 113.    ‡ Page 116.

petual spring. His language needs no foil, it wants no contrast, to add a borrowed lustre to its beauties. Oh, that he was always himself!

To make some amends, however, he immediately presents us with a striking picture of the price which the existing Governments of Europe set upon the lives and riches of their people\*;—yet there should be no innovation to raise their price. These “polished vices” are venerable with the rust of time, and, therefore, assert a claim to immortality. How ill does this accord with what he has before told us †. “The blood of man should never be shed but to redeem the blood of man. It is well shed for our family, for our friends, for our God, for our country, for our kind. The rest is vanity, the rest is crime.” Not a word about punctilios and catkins.

With respect to Cade’s case ‡, it is answered in a very few words. If Cade, and his “gang,” had got possession of London, and proclaimed themselves Lord Mayor, Aldermen and Common Council, they would not have been them; but if the Livery had chosen them Lord Mayor, Aldermen and Common Council, they would have been them legally. The constituted (mark the expression, whether it denotes usurpation)

\* Page 117. † Page 92. ‡ Page 119.

authorities in France, claim no inherent authority, they derive the whole of their power from popular delegation.

Of all the excentricities of this excentric performance, none is more singular than the definition of a body politic\*. "The body politic" of France, existed in the majesty of its throne, "in the dignity of its nobility, in the honour of its gentry, in the sanctity of its clergy, in the reverence of its magistracy, in the weight and consideration due to its landed property in the several bailiages, in the respect due to its moveable substance represented by the corporations of the kingdom." It does not consist in the Throne Nobility, &c. but in the *majesty* of the throne, the *dignity* of the nobility, &c. The body politic is not a thing, but a quality; an adjective, not a substantive. The people form no part of it. But when the king descended from his majesty, and the nobles from their dignity; when the clergy became unsanctified, the gentry dishonourable and the magistracy wanting to their own reverence; when weight and consideration were transferred from property to persons, or rather to principles; and monopolizing self-elected corporations were deemed public prejudices; when the quality was gone, what became of this body politic?

\* Page 119. † Ibid.



It of course died too—no such thing; the kingdom of France was turned out of France, and, with its locality, changed its part of speech, the adjective became substantive. It is like the legal form by which if an action is brought upon a bond, &c. made in the East Indies, the declaration states, that it was made at Bengal, in the East-Indies, in the city of Westminster.

Mr. Burke, like the Guinea fowls he introduced in a former scene, is continually crying, that all that has been done in France was by a faction; and that if the same tragedies should be repeated here, which God forbid! it would be by a faction. It must be by a faction of the whole nation, or Jacobinism must invigorate the muscles of the body, as it does those of the mind, to enable the few to lord it over the many.

Mr. Burke, with the most perfect candour, and with that heart-seizing eloquence so peculiarly his own, delineates\* the sufferings of the emigrants relying on royal promises. It is true, it is under a sort of fiction of what his feelings would be were they English refugees; but the fiction faithfully represents the unparalleled treatment of the French, who have enlisted, or, perhaps, have been pressed into our service. No matter how great their demerits towards their

\* Page 122.

own nation, that is not the question; proscribed already, their proscription ought not to have been rendered irredeemable, and themselves delivered up to certain death. The generals who excluded them from cartels deserved hanging, and what do those ministers deserve who suffer them to escape? Farewel English hospitality! It was of a piece with enlisting the fencibles upon the express condition that they should not be drafted, and drafting them immediately, to send the Emigrants upon expeditions of plunder, or from whence there was no retreat. The stain of Quiberon is indelible. The hunting the Maroons with blood-hounds is scarcely more so. Does not the history of courts afford abundant matter of invective? Jacobinism itself cannot monopolize it; and Mr. Burke, to do him justice, not unfrequently pays them a portion of their tribute.

Mr. Burke continues\*, "I know that all I  
 " have said of the systematic unfociability of this  
 " new-invented species of republic, and the im-  
 " possibility of preserving peace, is answered by  
 " asserting, that the scheme of manners, morals,  
 " and even of maxims and principles of state, is  
 " of no weight in a question of peace or war be-  
 " tween communities." This answer he will  
 not admit, I shall, therefore, contest the point

\* Page 125.

with him. It is not true, as he has asserted\*, that Europe is one great state, differing merely in territorial regulations, but having fundamentally the same laws and the same religion. If, by the word "fundamental," he means derived from the same origin, he is strictly correct; the religions are christian, and the constitutions feudal. But the different edifices which have been built upon these foundations, differ so totally, that it requires a learned and laborious research to discover their original unity; for not only the deductions, but the principles themselves, are so totally changed, that the laws, manners, constitutions and religions of the different states, many of them, at least, bear not the least resemblance to each other. In what, I ask, does the Church of England resemble that of Rome? or its morals those of Italy or Spain? or its constitution that of Portugal or the Germanic States? The springs of action, the ruling passions all differ; how then are they fundamentally the same? This is a corroboration of the Algerine argument. It is the first time that I have heard Algiers called a Republic†. I presume that Republic is the general denomination of all governments indescribably bad; if so, we may call the Popedom the the Republic of St. Peter.

\* Page 110.

† Page 127.

When



When our ancestors \* reposed, in what is called the executive government, the power of peace and war, they delegated a trust, and did not confer an absolute authority. The burden of it was to be borne by them, their blood and treasure was the price to be paid for it; they certainly, therefore, did not, could not intend to renounce for themselves and their unborn posterity, (and if they did, the renunciation is void;) the privilege of deciding upon the propriety or impropriety of such measures. So far from it, that they empowered the House of Commons to withhold the supplies, by way of counterpoise to this exorbitant prerogative.

The people are competent to judge. Ministers should fairly state the whole case to them, they have then done their duty; and, be the result what it may, they are blameless. Although seated upon a higher eminence, yet in most, if not in all wars,—indubitably in this, the people know enough to form an accurate estimate of the propriety of commencing and continuing hostilities. If they do not, it must arise from the criminal concealment, or misrepresentation of Ministers, and if they are incapable of judging when the whole is before them, it is a sufficient demonstration of the badness of the go-

\* Page 131.

vernment, which, instead of enlarging their talents, and cultivating their understandings, breeds them up in ignorance and stupid torpor. The laws, and of course the administration of the laws, are in this sense, the parent of the state; their care should be ever on the whole, and on every individual. Politics is the business of every man; it is, therefore, as much the duty of government to render every citizen politically wise, as it is the duty of parents to render their children religiously so, and skilful in the calling by which they are to get their bread.

I agree, that it is wise to conceal parts of a public proceeding, but that the original whole ought to be made public. When the people have approved of a measure, they give administration credit for the means of carrying it into execution, and should not call for the development of a particular plan, while it is pending, lest the enemy should be enabled to provide against it; but as soon as it is completed, they have a right to a distinct and specific detail. Much, however, depends upon the honesty and goodness of the Ministers characters; we can trust one man with our life, we cannot trust another with a skain of thread, even while we see him and hold him.

Mr.

Mr. Burke concludes his first letter with a glowing panegyric upon ministry, and which some persons, especially when they recollect the epithets he formerly lavished upon them, might be tempted to consider as ironical. Without enquiring into the causes of this extraordinary mutation of sentiments, I will give him credit for his sincerity, and conclude my strictures upon his first letter with observing, that he exercises the same natural right which the Jacobins do, and for which he condemns them to temporal, and it should seem to eternal perdition. "To exert reason is not to revolt against authority, reason and authority do not move in the same parallel\*." Let then, this venerable statesman deal fairly with us, and instead of denouncing us for avowing and defending our principles, confute them.

Under the old government, France was but a limb of the body politic of Europe. Under the new government, she is a complete body of herself, greater and more powerful than the rest of Europe. This war, therefore, differs from all preceding wars, and the present peace will materially change the face of christendom. We have had too palpable proofs of Prussian and Austrian disinterestedness to give much credit to their declaration†;

\* Page 138.

† Page 142.



and Mr. Burke acknowledges, that their practice has not corresponded with it; and the proclamations of Brunswick and Cobourg, equally evidence their insincerity and inhumanity. These "first benefactors of mankind" have, however, found their error; (a new philosopher has discovered that crimes are but mistakes) one of them is now the ally and faithful friend of these anarchists and desolaters, and the other continues hostilities, not from choice, but necessity; as the suits he has preferred for peace shew.

I now come to the most important part of Mr. Burke's pamphlet\*. "It is not France, "extending a foreign empire over other nations, it is a sect aiming at universal empire, "and beginning with France. The leaders of "that sect secured the *centre of Europe*, and "that secured, they knew that whatever might "be the event of battles and sieges, their "*cause* was victorious." A sect cannot attain universal empire by force of arms, it must use gentler means, and apply to the passions and understandings of mankind; it must hold out to them advantages they do not enjoy, and demonstrate how they are to be obtained. People will seldom let go a certainty for an uncertainty, they generally square their actions by the old

\* Page 134.

proverb, "a bird in the hand is worth two in the bush." They are not so inordinately fond of speculation as to stamp the die for their all; a mere appeal to the passions would therefore procure them but few converts. An application to the understanding must be cool, dispassionate, and built upon a rock. No man is so stupid, but he can tell whether he is happy and comfortable; if he is not, a remedy must be pointed out, and an assurance given that the exchange will not be for the worse; he must be clearly shewn how his felicity may be increased, the expence at which the amelioration can be purchased, and what will be the clear gain upon the improvement.

Political writers have long prognosticated the downfall of all the states of Europe. France, under the old government, had made greater proportionable exertions, than any other state, and therefore outstript her compeers in the race to the goal of bankruptcy and ruin. Their superior misery first awakened their reflection, and forcibly suggested the necessity of reform. In a former publication I asserted, and I here repeat it, that at the beginning of the struggle, the popular leaders had no idea of revolution; that their object was a limited monarchy; and that the irresolution and inconstancy of Lewis

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the 16th, and the interference of the surrounding potentates, prefaced with the royal proclamation of the tender-hearted Duke of Brunswick, were the foundation upon which their present stupendous fabric has been erected. The road which they have travelled was unbeaten, no human foot had trod it, or mortal imagination conceived it; they could not draw the plan of an edifice, whose structure they were unable to comprehend, and the boldest adventurer dared not to have contemplated a total regeneration of human nature. It arose out of events. They had, indeed, the example of America before them; but America had only changed her government; her hospitable manners and morals remained. But here, manners and morals were to be as completely revolutionized as the body politic itself. Looking to the restoration of their own country, her patriots began the glorious struggle, bearing the consecrated banner of truth and reason; the people enlisted under them in multitudes, and they soon spoke the language of a united nation. The throne yet stood, but the endeavours to deform it with the snakes of ancient despotism, opened a gulf into which it has eternally sunk. The pillars of the globe are not more durable than the Republic of France.

The



The other governments, however, though beaten, were not distanced; they were all within sight of the winning post of bankruptcy when France reached it. Oppression hung heavily upon the people, and awakened, and instructed by the example of France, they were seized with the same generous emulation of distinguishing themselves in the annals of freedom, and of snatching their countries from the precipice on whose brink they stood. They admired the French revolution, but did not, as Mr. Burke asserts, approve of the conduct of its leaders in the lump, or justify the enormities they committed, but still they wished it to be finally triumphant, well assured that any price would be a cheap purchase of the blessings it would bestow upon themselves and their latest posterity.

Their sectaries in other countries acted not in confederation with them; they approved of their principles, and were desirous of procuring for themselves that share, which in every government the democracy ought to possess. In England, their demand is universal suffrage and annual parliaments; nor have all the trials for treason and sedition, which have so abundantly filled the coffers of the crown lawyers, been able to prove that their aim is carried further. There  
may,

may, indeed, be an instance or two of the conviction of a drunkard or a spy, for some gross indecency of expression, which has been always reprobated by the popular societies, as inimical to the cause in which they are embarked; it therefore proves nothing against them.

Mr. Burke calls it a civil war\*. Let us now enquire, (it will not be a digression) how the Jacobins of England, as they are styled, have carried it on. They have not armed the people, or invited them to take up arms; on the contrary, they have always abjured such a mode of proceeding. They have not endeavoured to inflame party heats, or weaken it, by splitting it into factions. On the contrary, both by precept and example, they have endeavoured to soften all animosities, and attune all jarring dispositions into a full concert of harmony. They have held no private meetings, all their transactions are public, and whoever chuses may know them. They reason with their countrymen, and "to exert reason is not to rebel against authority." To persecute men, who systematically pursue such a peaceable line of conduct, is the most effectual method to propagate their doctrines. Individuals may be hurt by it; but

\* Page 144.

their

their injury is always more than compensated by the benefit which accrues to the cause.

Dismissing this novel mode of waging "civil" war, I now proceed\* to the lamentable imbecillity and infatuation which he tells us, like an epidemic disorder, pervades all the cabinets of Europe. And not only imbecillity and infatuation, but treachery and robbery. The scriptural order has been reversed, and the legion of Devils have gone out of the swine and entered into the men. Had any but Mr. Burke convicted the monarchy of Europe of lunacy and felony, the Attorney General, with all the indignant majesty of a royal tyger, would have sprung upon him and rent him in pieces. The Philippics of Demosthenes and Cicero dwindle into Lilliputians, when contrasted with this stupendous Emperor of Brobdignag. It is incapable of a single addition. Malice and envy cannot throw on it an additional light, or cast a darker shade. I shall only add further, that in this age of miracles it is not one of the least, that Mr. Burke should be the enthusiastic advocate of kings, at the very moment in which he declares†, that they have not sense enough to keep from falling into the fire, or honesty to ab-

\* Page 146.

† Page 164.



stain from pilfering their neighbours goods when his house is in flames.

To require the French to cede their conquests, without offering an equivalent, would be a mockery, and we have no equivalent to offer. They aim not at transmarine territories. One province of Flanders is of more value to them than all they have lost in either Indies, and the only inducement they had to require the cession of Hispaniola, was to enable them to attack us the more effectually in a vulnerable quarter. They have found, that their true policy is to have a close compact state, and not one which, like a long-legged spider, has a claw in every quarter of the globe.

A peace with jacobin France would certainly differ materially from all former pacifications\*. For ages it has been the rival of England. Whatsoever alterations were made in its government, manners, and morals; change what would, its hatred to England was unchangeable. The two nations systematically worried one another, till wearied and exhausted, they were compelled to a temporary cessation of hostilities, which they called making peace, but which, in effect, was nothing more than taking breath between the

\* Page 158.

rounds,

rounds, and preparing for a more extensive desolation of the human species. Regenerated France has, for object, not the corrupt gratification of the lordly few, but the substantial happiness of all. No peasant so poor as to be overlooked by her parental eye. Peace, eternal peace, is therefore her motto; and the zeal she has displayed in the propagation of her principles, arises from the philanthropic regard a good man feels to conduct his wandering brethren to the road which he has discovered leads to their real welfare.

Mr. Burke \*, in more than the present instance, confounds popery with christianity, and concludes, that because they were desirous of destroying the former, they were of course hostile to the latter. He must know the immeasurable expanse, the irreconcilable difference that parts them;—that when the Pope enters in at one door, Jesus goes out at the other.

I know that every doctrine upon which men can warm, whether of religion or politics, is the subject of propagation. The mode of propagation constitutes the difference. Mahometanism and Popery were propagated with the sword. The effects prove the badness of the causes. Christianity was propagated with meekness, and yet, with unexampled enthusiasm; and, thanks be

\* Page 160.

to God, it does not want its apostles now, though out of the pale of the establishment. No wilderness so barren but a casual myrtle will blossom in it. But it is among the Methodists and Dissenters that we must look for the well cultivated garden of flowers. I admit, that the violent tempers of some men prompted them to violent measures; but, christianity excepted, I know nothing which, in any age, has been preached with so much zeal, kindness, and long suffering, as the principles of pure democracy.

The division of the French Revolutionists into philosophers and politicians\*, is ingenious, but fanciful. Mr. Burke has not dived so deeply into the primary causes of the Revolution, as he has into its remote effects.

If the political speculators of France were twenty to one more numerous than the political speculators of England†, they must amount to eight millions; nearly the whole number of adult men, "and there were few of this description who did not emulously set forward the "Revolution." This completely disproves the assertion, that it was effected "by a sect aiming "at universal dominion, and beginning with the "conquest of France‡." This proves that the French were not corrupted, but were all

\* Page 160.

† Page 164.

‡ Page 144.

corruptors;



corruptors; all "philosophers and politicians." Mr. Burke here refutes almost all that he has before contended for.

The crookedness of the French politics had long portended the destruction of the Government\*; it was hastening to the tomb by a natural decay. The seeds of the Revolution were sown a long time before they sprung up. We cannot trace them back to their first bursting of the blade, but, certainly, the generation of Louis XV. were not aware of the grand effects they would so speedily produce. America paved their way, and shewed them how to be free. The interference of Louis accelerated the catastrophe, and was the immediate cause of it. The connexion it established between the two countries organized the dissatisfied, and roused the energy of the people. But I have elsewhere stated my sentiments upon this point more elaborately.

The observations of the diplomatic politicians, or in other words, of the whole country †, were strong and pertinent; but not altogether pertinent for Mr. Burke to recapitulate. He has before ‡ described the weakness and wickedness of the reigning sovereigns of Europe, and he now recites objections which go to the de-

\* Page 164.

† Page 168.

‡ Page 146.

struction of monarchy itself. The fluctuation of the supreme authority is an unsurmountable barrier to the stability of a state. Instead of the eternal vigour of manhood, it is now a puling infant, now a tottering dotard; at one time a bold haughty hero, at another, a mean spirited abject monk. The force of the contrast between it and a republic, should have induced him to expunge this and the three following pages; they contain stronger arguments in favour of universal revolution, than any book I ever met with.

Mr. Burke has reared a stupendous pillar of the deformities of modern Europe\*. Its base is the folly and depravity of the present sovereigns; its shaft is the inherent badness of monarchy itself; and he now puts on the capital, the inadequacy of their constitutions to the grandeur and prosperity of the people. They aim at no one end—all is afloat, all depends on chance, or the character and disposition of the Sovereign and his Ministers. There is no provision made for the purity of religion, the preservation of liberty, the improvement of agriculture or commerce. All is at sea without a rudder or compass. No wonder they are without cohesion; and of these anarchical governments, England is the most chaotic†. Better

\* Page 175, &c.

† Page 176.

be without government than such governments as Mr. Burke describes. Without adding any eulogium of my own, upon that of the French, I compliment it sufficiently by styling it with him, the reverse of every other.

Mr. Burke winds up the whole of these elaborate letters, with the declaration\*, that "the new system in France cannot be rendered safe by any art, *that it must be destroyed, or it will destroy all Europe.*" Admit the proposition, and what does it prove? That all the governments of Europe ought to be destroyed. If French principles are better calculated to secure the happiness of the people than any others, they will, and ought to be universal; if they are not, they will perish of themselves. They court enquiry, which is a strong argument that they will bear it. A good cause never suffers by being written or spoken against, on the contrary, it acquires. New ideas may be gained, and improvements suggested by the discussion. When the arguments on both sides are before the public, there is little danger of their judging amiss. It is their interest to judge right.

Whatever may be the issue of these political speculations, Englishmen are much indebted to this venerable statesman. He first provoked the

\* Page 181.



discussion, he stands aloof from both parties, and darts his thunderbolts upon each. If he terrifies the people from Jacobinism, he will equally disgust them with Monarchy, and the whole of our triple Constitution. If the former be not right, he demonstrates that the latter is wrong, and that the political loadstone is yet unsound. There is yet another road to be travelled, and another mine to be explored, and the calls for popular energy and discussion are redoubled. Whatever is essential to human happiness, can and will be discovered—But not by the supine. Every faculty must be awakened, every power called into action; mere self exertion is not sufficient, every man must essay to rouse and to inspirit his neighbour. Let us not deceive ourselves. We live not in a world of rest; he lives most usefully who labours most indefatigably.



FINIS.